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CONGRESSMAN DAVID WU ANNOUNCES ED-FLEX AUTHORITY FOR OREGON

Secretary of Education grants flexibility program to help advance school improvement

Washington, DC – Congressman David Wu today announced that Oregon would be among the states granted Education Flexibility. Secretary of Education Richard Riley informed Congressman Wu earlier today that Oregon schools would be given authority to form the federal partnership.

"Ed Flex is a common sense way to improve Oregon schools," said Congressman Wu. "Ed Flex relies on local control, reduces government red tape and promotes flexibility with accountability. Oregon schools will be able to count on the federal government for needed assistance but not as a barrier to effective education reform."

In 1999, the president signed the new Education Flexibility (Ed Flex) Partnership Act into law after it was passed in the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. As a member of the Education Committee, Congressman Wu co-sponsored Ed Flex and supported this program throughout the legislative process. The legislation enables states to form partnerships with the federal education department. Under Ed Flex, states can waive many of the requirements of seven federal education programs to advance their school improvement efforts.

In order to be granted Ed Flex authority, states must show that they can waive state educational requirements that limit flexibility to improve schools and districts. The legislation requires waivers to be tracked to make sure they improve student performance – and waivers must be revoked when they fail to do so. States must meet the Title I requirement to hold children in schools that receive Title I funds to the same academic standards as other schools in the Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to improve educational achievement among disadvantaged children. Other states have used Ed Flex waivers to reduce class size for students.

Oregon was an Ed Flex pioneer state when a pilot program began in the early 1990s.

Oregon is the fourth state to receive Ed Flex authority under the 1999 legislation. Ed Flex authority will continue for five years if Oregon continues to meet the requirements.

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